other issues. I was going to say it also has jurisdiction over constitutional amendments and all kinds of issues.

Mr. CONYERS. All right. Is it a crime bill?

Mr. CHABOT. Pardon me?

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, is it a crime bill? Yes or no?

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, it is an issue that clearly is a crime against unborn children and as well as the mothers.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio is saying yes, I take it. It is sort of a crime bill.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CONYERS. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio. It is a crime bill.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, it is a crime bill as well as a constitutional issue.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio. It took a half a minute of my time to get to that. But it is a crime bill that comes out of the Subcommittee on the Constitution in the Committee on the Judiciary.

Now, you think we do not know why, do you not? You think we thought that it was tossed there by accident. But it is tossed there because it is changing the fundamental constitutional law in the most controlling case on abortion in current Federal judicial practice, Roe v. Wade. That is why it went there.

So I think that we ought to put all these cards on the table and not try to demonize the other side because we have a bill that does the same thing as the primary bill. But the only thing that we do not do is that we do not redefine what an embryo is. We do not change the status of a fetus or a fertilized egg. We do not make them all persons, and you do. There it is, I say to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT). That is the difference. If my colleagues corrected that difference, we would all be supporting their bill.

It turned out that the Lofgren substitute is even more harsh on those who violate women who are pregnant. So I just wanted my colleagues to take that under consideration as we continue to debate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) who is the chairperson of the Women's Caucus.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the ranking member for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 503. As the cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, I am insulted by this misleading piece of legislation. This legislation is deceptive, destructive, and a poor attempt to mislead and strip away a woman's reproductive rights. This bill is extremely volatile and has the potentiality to eradicate a woman's right to choose as recognized by the landmark case Roe v. Wade.

This bill, in fact, undermines a woman's right to choose as cited in the New York Times editorial yesterday, "The Reproductive Rights Under Attack.'' In fact, it says, "Packaged as a crime fighting measure, H.R. 503 is actually aimed at fulfilling a long-term goal of the right to life movement.''

I stand firmly in the belief that women's reproductive decisions are private and their individual freedoms must be preserved. Those who support this bill claim that it is necessary in order to vigorously punish offenders who harm pregnant women. If the emphasis of the bill is to protect women, why is this not mentioned anywhere in the bill.

Assault against pregnant women is serious. Legislation that has a separate agenda such as this one cannot provide the adequate protection to women.

I oppose H.R. 503 because its real purpose is to erode the reproductive rights of women. It is not intended to recognize violence against women. In fact, it does not even reference a woman. It could make matters worse for women by encouraging antiabortion prosecutors to pursue charges for harm to embryos or the fetus while ignoring the woman who has also been harmed.

Mr. Speaker, this is, indeed, a smoke screen. It is an affront to American women who wish to have their reproductive rights left to them. I say, if you are going to protect the rights of all other folks, the gun owners, the oil drillers, then protect the rights of women. I oppose H.R. 503.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) has questioned the Subcommittee on the Constitution considering this bill and has said that this is a wholesale assault on the constitutional rights granted women by Roe v. Wade. He is wrong.

Twenty-four States have statutes similar to the one that is being considered today. If those statutes which protect the rights of unborn children were such an assault on the mother's constitutional right, every one of them would have been struck down by a Federal court, from the District Court to the Supreme Court level. They have not been, because it is not an assault on the constitutional right of a woman to choose.

Then we just heard from the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD) that this strips away women's reproductive rights. I would submit to the gentlewoman from California that, if the woman wanted to have an abortion, she would have had an abortion before the assault took place. In these cases that this bill will protect, the woman wants to have her child born.

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So she has already made her choice, and that was for the child to be born. If someone takes away that child's right to life through an assault or through a murder, then that person, that criminal, ought to be prosecuted twice. You do not want the criminal prosecuted twice when the woman has chosen to bring that child to term and have that child born alive.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. HART).

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill and agree with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that this issue has nothing to do with abortion. Unlike the substitute that will be offered later today, this bill specifically exempts any activity involving a legal abortion. This bill is directed only at protecting the unborn child. It is an extension. In fact, this bill allows for an additional prosecution after a person has committed a violent act against the woman herself. Therefore, it does recognize the woman. In fact, it recognizes the woman first.

Mr. Speaker, this woman that we are talking about must be pregnant, but she must first be a victim of a crime of one of over 60 Federal statutes that are violent acts perpetrated against the woman. Only then will this legislation kick in, basically, as a way to also prosecute that perpetrator for the crime done against the unborn child.

I commend to my colleagues that this is a measure that respects the decision of the woman to bear her child. This is a measure that is an additional ability for the Federal Government to prosecute against an extreme act of domestic violence that causes not only harm to a woman, but also harm and often death to her unborn child.

Mr. Speaker, as a State Senator, I worked on issues of domestic violence, and was proud, in 1998, to support Pennsylvania's version of this bill. In fact, the vast majority of Senators and House members in Pennsylvania, both pro-choice and pro-life, supported this measure because we understand that domestic violence is a serious problem in this country. Unfortunately, statistics show that many of the children, the unborn children who are killed in these cases, their mothers are victims of domestic violence, as are they. In fact, as published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, March 21, 2001, a study that was done in Maryland recognized the highest percentage of pregnant women who die, die as a result of homicide.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to my colleagues that this is a serious issue of violence, a serious issue of domestic violence, and it should not be clouded by concern about future legislation or potential legislation that some believe may try to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Our ultimate concern here should be the real victims of crime. The real victims of crime continue to be women who are victims of domestic violence due to an outraged partner. The real victims of crime are their unborn children, who often are the cause of the violence directed towards the mother.